

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (Currently amended) A method of manufacturing a ceramic bodies having a construction such honeycomb body so constructed that cells are alternately sealed at one but not both end surfaces of a ceramic honeycomb structural the body by filling a sealing slurry into predetermined cells at both end surfaces of a ceramic honeycomb formed body and sintering the ceramic honeycomb formed body, comprising the steps of:

forming a mask for respective ceramic honeycomb formed bodies by arranging a sheet on an end surface of the ceramic honeycomb formed body and piercing holes in the sheet at positions corresponding to the predetermined cells;

immersing an end portion of the ceramic honeycomb formed body to which the mask is arranged into the sealing slurry; and

filling the sealing slurry into the cells through the holes pierced in the mask in a quantity sufficient to seal the filled cells.

2. (Original) The method of manufacturing ceramic bodies according to claim 1, wherein the piercing step of the sheet arranged at the end surface of the ceramic honeycomb formed

Serial No. 10/084,658

body is performed respectively for sub-blocks obtained by dividing the cells at the end surface into sub regions.

3. (Original) The method of manufacturing ceramic bodies according to claim 1, wherein the piercing step of the sheet arranged at the end surface of the ceramic honeycomb formed body is performed by using a laser.

4. (Original) The method of manufacturing ceramic bodies according to claim 1, wherein a diameter of the hole pierced in the sheet is set in such a manner that the hole has an area of 30-70% of an area of respective cells.

5. (Original) The method of manufacturing ceramic bodies according to claim 1, wherein positions of the cells are detected by means of an image processing process.

6. (Original) The method of manufacturing ceramic bodies according to claim 1, wherein the piercing step of the sheet arranged at the end surface of the ceramic honeycomb formed body is performed by using one needle or a pinholder having

Serial No. 10/084,658

needles at positions corresponding to the cells to be sealed  
of the ceramic honeycomb formed body.

REMARKS

The independent claim has been amended in a sincere attempt to overcome the cited art.

Enclosed herewith are replacement drawings for Fig. 3b when the Japanese phrase has been changed to its English translation of "cross section" and for Figs. 5a-c bearing the legend "Prior Art". Also enclosed are new drawings showing the use of a laser and a needle/pinholder referred to in claims 3 and 6, respectively. The specification has been amended to refer to these new drawings.

The rejection of claims 1 to 6 under the second paragraph of 35 USC 112 as indefinite is acknowledged. Claim 1 as amended now uses line indentations and there is no alternate reference to body (singular) and bodies (plural) in the claim.

The rejection of claims 1 to 4 and 6 under 35 USC 102 as anticipated by Ogawa et al. '193, if applied to the claims as amended, is respectfully traversed. Claim 1 has been revised to specify that the sealing slurry is filled into the cells through the holes pierced in the mask "in a quantity sufficient to seal the filled cells." The specification and the drawings clearly provide support for this additional feature of the invention.

Serial No. 10/084,658

In contrast, Ogawa et al. '193 clearly teaches the use of two different materials to seal the filled cells. See the discussion in the patent column 5 as well as patent claims 1 and 11. The Ogawa et al. '193 method requires dipping an end surface of a ceramic honeycomb structural body having a film attached thereto into a sealing slurry mixture, then "subsequently passing a kneaded pasty sealing material green body into the ends of the channels which have slurry adhering to," and firing the body, "whereby said adhered slurry and said kneaded pasty material seal the selected channels." (The quotes are taken from patent claim 1 in column 9.) See also patent Figs. 7 and 8 and the related discussion. The instant claims patentably define over the reference method.

The rejection of claim 5 under 35 USC 103 as unpatentable over Ogawa et al. '193 in view of Bonzo '773 is also respectfully traversed. The secondary reference is cited to show the use of an image processing process to detect cell positions. The reference, however, overcomes none of the deficiencies of Ogawa et al. '193 discussed above and the rejection should be withdrawn as well.

The Examiner is thanked for listing the references provided with the Information Disclosure Statements.

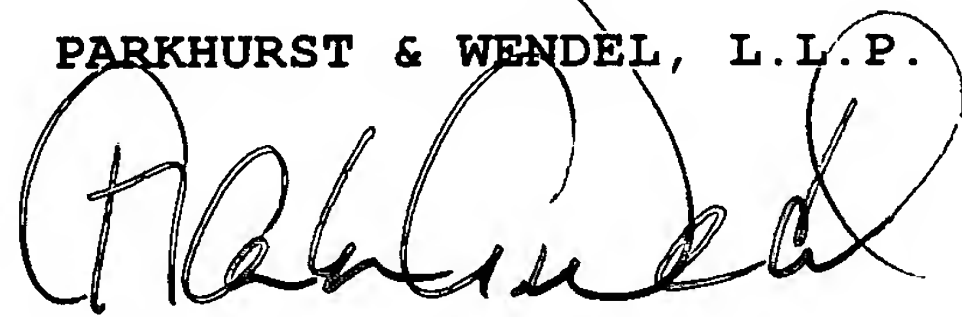
Serial No. 10/084,658

In view of the foregoing revisions and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the application is in condition for allowance and a USPTO paper to those ends is earnestly solicited.

The Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned if additional changes are required in the case prior to allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

PARKHURST & WENDEL, L.L.P.



Charles A. Wendel

Registration No. 24,453

September 24, 2003

Date

CAW/ch

Attorney Docket No.: NSUG:854

PARKHURST & WENDEL, L.L.P.

1421 Prince Street

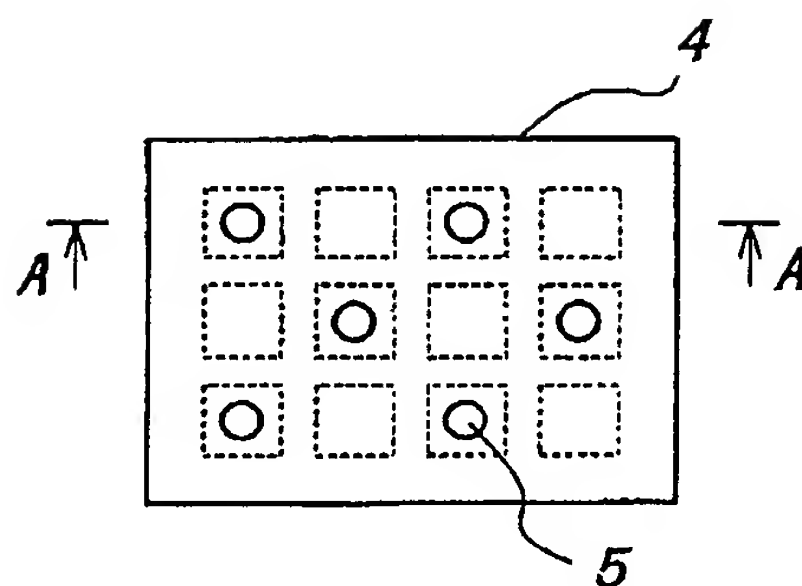
Suite 210

Alexandria, Virginia 22314-2805

Telephone: (703) 739-0220



*FIG. 3a*



*FIG. 3b*

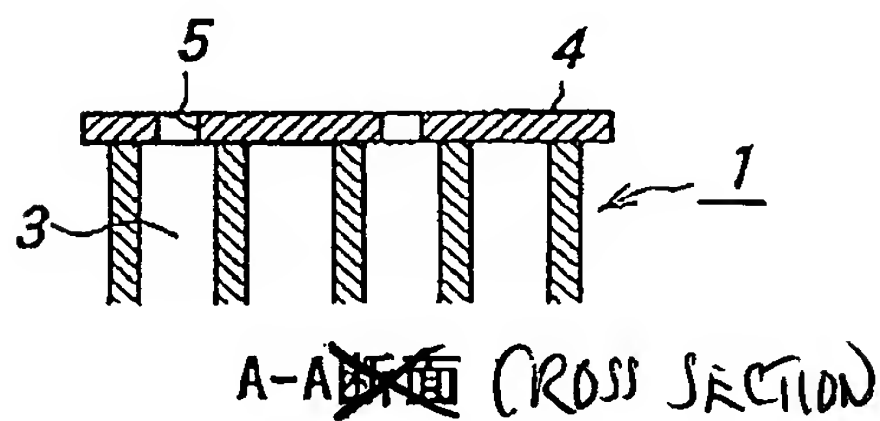
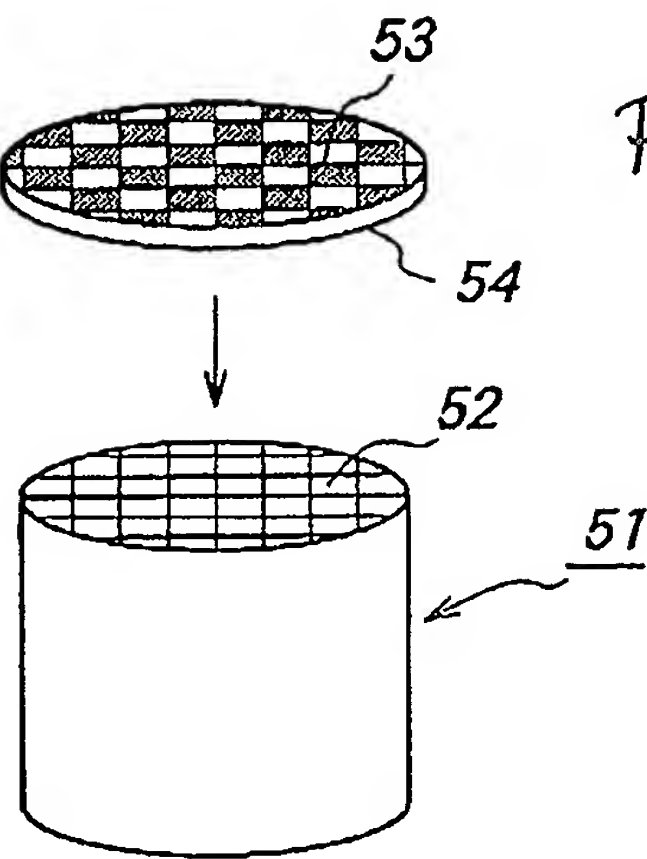


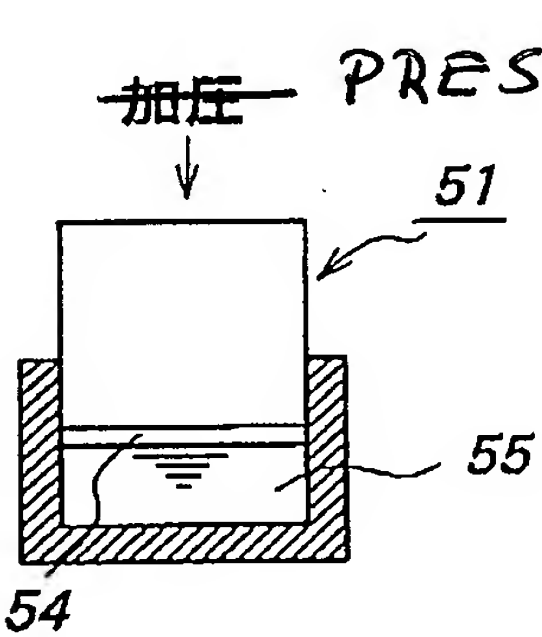


FIG. 5a



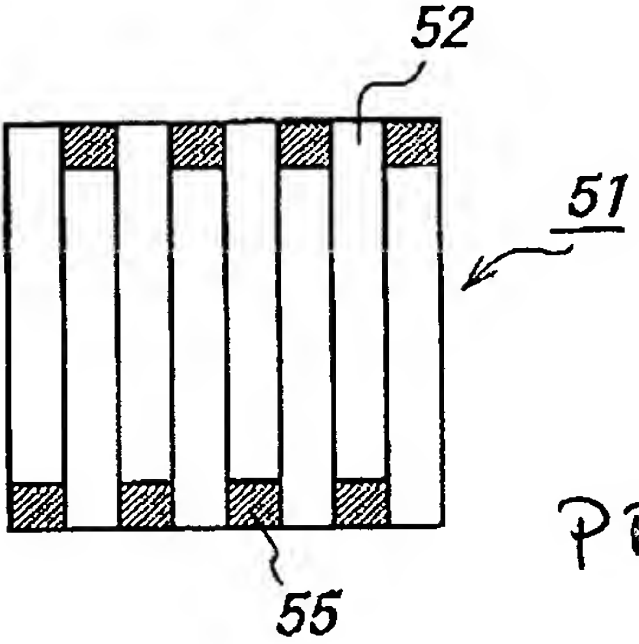
PRIOR ART

FIG. 5b



PRIOR ART

FIG. 5c



PRIOR ART